

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
DAVID RICHARDSON, PLANNER**

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June 1, 2010

MEMORANDUM

To: Gulf County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
From: David Richardson, Planner/Co-Floodplain Administrator
For: Gulf County, Florida
NFIP Number 120098
Subject: 2010 Floodplain Management Progress Report
Date: August 24, 2010

Background

In order for a community property owner to receive insurance premium reductions for National Flood Insurance, the community must participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) program. As a condition of continued participation in the CRS program, the community is required to complete an annual recertification report and submit it to FEMA by October 1st. This memorandum is Gulf County's progress report and the process also requires this report be distributed to the media and be made available to the public. The report will also be available on the Planning Departments web page.

The Gulf County, Florida Floodplain Management Plan was adopted by the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on September 29, 1998. Copies of the plan have been and are available for review in the Gulf County Planning Department, Room 312 and Gulf County Building Department, Room 305 located in the Robert M. Moore Administration Building. Copies for purchase are available from the Clerk of the Courts Office in the Main Court House. Both facilities are located at 1000 Cecil G. Costin, Sr. Blvd., Port St. Joe, Florida, 32456. The flood plain ordinance is posted on the Planning Departments web page.

Flood Events

For the first half of the report period of August through December 2009, Gulf County had no activity in August and October, but experienced flooding in September, November and December. In September, Georgia experience heavy rains on their portion of the river system that eventually impacted the Douglas and Willis Landings with minor flooding. In November, Tropical Storm Ida caused heavy rain fall on the river system that resulted in minor flooding along the river system. Lake Grove Rd., Douglas Landing and Willis Landing received flood waters. In December, a low pressure system out of the Gulf caused coastal flooding and erosion

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and dumped 5" or more of rain on most of the county. This resulted in some street flooding and infrastructure impacts, especially in Port St. Joe. Also about mid-December, another El Niño system caused additional up stream flooding that impacted the areas subject to river flooding. This series of events triggered bank erosion, especially in the Lake Grove area along Byrd Parker Drive which is nearly cut into. For the second half of the reporting period from January through July 2010, Gulf County continued to experienced El Nino flooding from series of fronts and low pressure systems that caused heavy rains to fall on the river systems in Alabama, Georgia and Florida causing moderate flooding into April. May, June and July experienced no major impacts that allow the river system to slowly stabilize.

Floodplain Management Plan Element Review

A. Base Flood Elevation

Gulf County is continuing to require FEMA Flood Elevation Certificates for residential and commercial structures built in a flood zone. We are also enforcing the one foot freeboard as applicable to respective flood zones. There was no variances approved dealing with floodplain management.

B. Flood Mapping

Beginning April 16, 2009, the County began enforcing the G map series. The G series was a partial map revision for the county that will replace the F series maps with the same panel numbers. So as of April 16, 2009, the Gulf County FIRM maps will have both F and G series maps.

The LiDAR data that was that was mentioned in the previous progress report has been made available to the county and the elevation data has been used to respond to several mapping issues. The county staff continues to assist the public with their NFIP mapping and insurance issues. With the present housing financial crisis continuing into 2010, flood insurance is a major issue with homeowner mortgages.

C. Flood Protection Assistance:

The County has maintained a listing of books and pamphlets for retrofitting existing structures. The County Building Department has remained current with retrofitting issues as outlined in the action plan. FIRM Panels are available in the libraries and in the Planning Department. The Planning, GIS and Building Departments use NFIP GIS data to assist individuals in ascertaining their flood zones.

An interactive GIS based flood zone mapping is available on a web site hosted by the GIS Department. A static map is available on the Planning Department web page at www.gulfcounty-fl.gov.

D. Flood Protection Materials

Copies of various FEMA publications have been acquired and are available for public review. The County will assist the public in getting any copies they request. We have also included links to these documents on the Planning Department web page at www.gulfcounty-fl.gov.

E. Flood Warning, Mitigation and Preparedness

Gulf County is very sensitive to the events that affect both coastal and inland flooding. Gulf County Emergency Management Office monitors available data and will alert the proper authorities and public of potential hazardous conditions as needed. Gulf County's LMS was revised and adopted in 2005 and is currently being reviewed by the State for compliance approval. The Northwest Florida Water Management District has assume some of the regulatory responsibility for stormwater permitting from DEP. Gulf County continues to address drainage issues through culvert permitting and by maintaining ditch and swell infrastructures. The county is still proposing a project that will add more culverts along CR 387 (Doc Whitfield Rd.) that will allow flood waters to disperse at several outlets instead of being directed to a single outlet. This action should help reduce the flooding impacts to the Howard Creek area. Gulf County is also working with State and Federal agencies to reduce the coastal flooding impacts to SR 30E at the Stump Hole by hardening the rock berm that protects SR 30E from the Gulf Of Mexico. This is a \$148,000 project. The \$22 million beach re-nourishment project continues to experience erosion and has two years remaining on the bond payment by the Cape San Blas property owners through a MSTU. The County assisted by Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) has appealed the rejection by FEMA for a mitigation project to replace the lost beach due to coastal wave action. FEMA rejection was largely based on the objection by US Fish and Wildlife who used the CBRA as a reason for opposition. The County maintains that one goal of the CBRA is habitat protection which is fulfilled through beach re-nourishment by maintaining the sandy beach as a coastal habitat especially for sea turtles. Without the re-nourishment project, there would be no sandy beach for recreation and the sea turtles, etc. would lose valuable sandy beach habitat. Also, the re-nourishment project will not increase building density, another goal of the CBRA. The County is also working on a \$300,125 grant to pipe and fill the Americus Avenue ditch outfall before it flows into Gulf waters. This should help improve discharge water quality and reduce coastal surge impacts.

F. Community Rating System (CRS)

Through the determination of BOCC to enforce the regulations that govern flood protection and the daily performance of their duties by staffs of the Planning Department, Building Department and GIS Department, the County maintains a Class 8 rating. This rating is translated into lower premium cost for flood insurance.

In the first quarter of 2010, the State did an audit of the County's administration of the NFIP and found the Planning and Building Departments performance as Co-Floodplain Administrators was acceptable with no major issues.

G. Recommendations

With the current local, state and national economic recession, the Planning Department as Co-Floodplain Administrator recommends to the BOCC that the County Grant Department continue to seek grants to mitigate the flooding issues within the county; for the Public Works Department to continue maintaining operational projects such as culvert permitting, ditch cleaning and swale maintenance as part of flood and stormwater control; and for the Emergency Management Department, Planning Department and Building Department to continue to implement the Florida Building Code, Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS), Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), Land Development Regulations (LDR) and Flood Ordinance as applicable to insure the health and safety of the County from flood events through preparedness, protection and mitigation.

Additional Information

Should the BOCC or public have any questions concerning flood plain management, please contact the Planning Department. Should your question be beyond our knowledge, we will seek outside expertise to get an answer to your question.

